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SOUTHERN STATES THE MOST INNOVATIVE, SAYS NITI AAYOG

Niti Aayog's India Innovation Index 2020 ranks Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala the best in innovation

BIHAR, JHARKHAND AT BOTTOM OF RANKINGS

Maharashtra is the only non-south Indian state in the top five, at the second spot. Tamil Nadu is No 3. Telangana has stayed in the 4th place while Kerala replaced Haryana for the 5th slot. Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar were at the bottom of the rankings. The states and UTs have been divided into 17 'major states', 10 'North-Eastern and hill states', and 9 'city states and UTs.

DELHI NO 1 AMONG UNION TERRITORIES

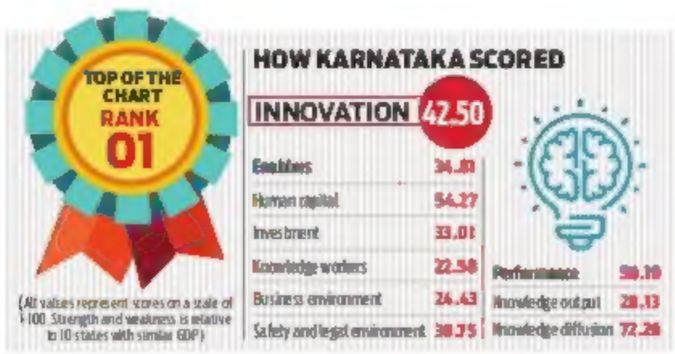
- The index ranks states and Union territories based on their support to innovation. It considers human capital, investments, business & legal environment, new businesses and patent registrations
- Among hill states, Himachal Pradesh topped and among Union Territories Delhi was the most innovative, followed by Chandigarh

36

THE INDEX CONSISTS OF HARD DATA (32 INDICATORS) AND 4 COMPOSITE INDICATORS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARWAD • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Karnataka retains top spot on innovation index


TOP OF THE CHART
RANK 01
(All values represent scores on a scale of 1-100. Strength and weakness is relative to 10 states with similar GDP)
HOW KARNATAKA SCORED
INNOVATION 42.50
Enablers 34.80
Human capital 54.27
Investment 33.01
Knowledge workers 22.58
Business environment 24.43
Safety and legal environment 38.75
Performance 50.10
Knowledge output 28.13
Knowledge diffusion 72.26

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA has retained the top position in the innovation index for a second year in a row, a pointer to its strength in maintaining the leadership position. The state's innovation score of 42.5 was way above the average score of 25.35 among the major states. Maharashtra was in second place with a score of 38 and Bihar in the last place with just 14.5. Among City States and Union Territories, Delhi topped list.

Skilled human resource, ease of doing business, legalities, knowledge dissemination, health and education are some of the parameters considered to decide the ranking. The NITI Aayog's Innovation Index 2020 report, released on Wednesday, attributes Karnataka's top rank to the number of venture capital deals, information and communication technology exports, high foreign direct investment inflow among other factors.

"Karnataka is the leader in innovation. The top position has been confirmed again by the NITI Aayog's India Innovation Index 2020 ranking," said Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa. The state has maintained top ranking despite new indicators such as expenditure by states on R&D and new business registration being added as parameters this time, said Deputy CM Dr C N Ashwath Narayana, who also holds Information Technology portfolio.

The innovation index captures the trends and provides detailed analyses of the various factors that drive innovation at district, state and at the national level. P7

HANDS FULL ON DAY ONE

Biden is expected to sign 17 executive actions on Day One. They include:

- Freezing dozens of last-minute Trump administration regulations
- Sending an immigration bill to Congress that will offer citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants
- Enforcing nationwide mask and social-distancing norms
- Creating a Covid-19 response team that reports directly to the President
- Terminating ban on arrivals from certain Muslim countries
- Halting construction of border wall
- Rejoining the Paris climate accord
- Extending relief on student loans

Joe Biden is sworn in as the 46th president of the US by Chief Justice John Roberts as his wife Jill Biden holds the Bible at the Capitol, Washington on Wednesday | AP

Day of democracy, says Prez Biden; US gets 1st woman V-P

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

JOE Biden, 78, took oath as the 46th President of the US on Wednesday around 10:15 pm IST, ending Donald Trump's controversial rule that lasted four years. Minutes before, Indian-origin Kamala Harris, 56, was sworn in as the first woman Vice President.

Biden was administered the oath of office by Chief Justice John Roberts at the West Front of the Capitol, the traditional location for presidential inaugural ceremonies, where a deadly violence took place just two weeks ago. The ceremony was held under the watch of 25,000 National Guards.

"This is America's Day. This is democracy's day. A day of history and hope," Biden said in his inaugural speech. "I will be president for all Americans. White supremacy, domestic terrorism we will defeat. I want every American to join me in this cause," he added.

Outgoing Vice President Mike Pence attended the ceremony, so did former presidents Barack Obama, George W Bush and Bill Clinton. As expected, Trump skipped the inauguration as he left the White House on the Marine One presidential helicopter along with his wife Melania, hours before Biden's inauguration.

Around 1,000 people attended the swearing-in ceremony, including Supreme Court justices and members of Congress, who were limited to just one guest each due to the pandemic.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first to congratulate Biden.

"My warmest congratulations to @JoeBiden on his assumption of office as President of the United States. I look forward to working with him to strengthen India-US strategic partnership," the Prime Minister tweeted

According to experts, the broad trajectory of the strategic and defence cooperation between India and the US will expand under Biden's presidency. The US is expected to continue its tough stance on China.

Before leaving the White House, Trump boasted he had "an amazing four years" and that it would not be a "long goodbye", hinting at his plan to contest in the next presidential election.

Meanwhile, some US media outlets reported that Trump might start a new political outfit, tentatively named the Patriot Party, as he was disgusted with Senate Republicans who will soon decide whether the ex-president should be convicted during his impeachment trial. P12

No Biden in Don's farewell message

Trump did not mention Biden's name in his farewell video message. "This week we inaugurate a new administration and pray for its success in keeping America safe and prosperous," Trump said. "We extend our best wishes. And we also want them to have luck. A very important word," he added

Govt proposes to put farm laws on hold for two years to break the ice

Farmer unions to internally discuss offer before the next round of talks on Friday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi/Chandigarh

THE tenth round of talks with the protesting farmers on Wednesday opened a window of opportunity to break the deadlock on the contentious farm laws with the Centre proposing to constitute a new committee as also keeping the laws on hold for two years or more and the farmers agreeing to consider them.

The two sides will meet again on Friday, when the farmers are expected to spell out their stand on the suggestions after holding consultations among themselves on Thursday.

The fact that the government came out with new proposals and the farmers agreed to examine them are being seen as signs of accommodation from both sides. Until Wednesday, the government's consistent stand was that it was ready to amend the laws while the farmers remained firm in their repeal-or-nothing demand.

Sources said the Centre, during the meeting, urged the farmers to consider its proposal for an hour separately. The two sides broke off into different rooms following which the farmer unions agreed to consider the offer. However, they insisted that their demand of repealing the laws still stands.

Krantikari Kisan Union president Darshan Pal said, "Just because we have decided to discuss this new proposal of the government and decided to hold a string of meetings tomorrow between ourselves does not mean that we have backtracked from our demand of a repeal of the three laws."

The opportunity to end the impasse comes days ahead of the crucial budget session of Parliament beginning on January 29. With the Opposition gathering ammunition to attack the government on the farm laws, the Centre appears to keen to resolve the stand-off before the session.

According to sources, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar told the farmers that the Centre was even ready to file an affidavit in the Supreme Court on putting off the laws for an extended period to dispel any doubts in their minds. He also stressed that a consensus should be reached between the two sides before the meeting ends as it was the occasion of Guru Gobind Singh's Parkash Parv.

"There is some positive response from the government and a new offer was on the table. The unions accepted it and a final decision will be taken by the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha," Hannan Mollah of the All India Kisan Sabha said.

On the Centre's demand to call off the tractor rally, farmer unions refused to do so till an agreement is arrived at on repealing the farm laws. The Centre, according to sources, asked the farmers to approach the Supreme Court if it wanted a repeal. P9

Union minister Tomar briefing the media after the meeting | PARVEEN NEGI

OUT-OF-THE-BOX IDEAS

Three contentious new farm sector laws to be put on ice for two years or more

To seek repeal of the laws, farmers are free to go to the SC

For anything short of repeal, a new committee comprising members from both sides can be formed to thrash out the differences, clause by clause

Issue of legal sanctity to MSP can also be discussed

Govt to file fresh affidavit in SC on extending the duration of putting the laws in abeyance

Congress workers and farmers participate in the 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' stir, protesting against the farm laws, in Bengaluru on Wednesday | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

Sea of green at rally against farm laws; Congress leaders detained

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

DRAMATIC scenes were witnessed in the central parts of Bengaluru on Tuesday as thousands of Congress workers and farmers joined the party's call for a protest rally against the Union Government's farm bills. Thousands sporting green shawls and waving Congress flags, gathered at the Sangolli Rayanna statue near City Railway Station even as hundreds started gathering at Freedom Park.

Amid heavy police deployment, the protesters marched from the City Railway Station to Freedom Park, led by Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D K Shivakumar, Opposition Leader in the Legislative Assembly Siddaramaiah and other leaders almost entirely occupying the Anand Rao Circle flyover at one point. CONTINUED ON: P4

K'TAKA'S VACCINE DRIVE

Total sessions planned	Total sessions held
853	830

Total beneficiary target set: 62,772

Beneficiary target achieved: 34,583

Target percentage achieved: 55%

Doctor dies 2 days after Covid shot

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shivamogga /Bengaluru

IN the second such case in Karnataka in a span of three days, a person who was administered the Covishield vaccine two days earlier, died on Wednesday morning due to Myocardial Infarction. The Health Department, however, maintained that the death was not related to the vaccine. Meanwhile, Karnataka has crossed the one lakh mark for beneficiaries for the Covid-19 vaccination.

The deceased is Dr Jayaprakash (59), a well-known orthopaedic surgeon and owner of J P Hospital in Shivamogga. According to health department officials, he was given a jab on Monday after which he continued to work at the hospital. He taught students at a private medical college and also saw out-patients in his hospital. However, on Wednesday morning, he complained of chest pain and was rushed to hospital where he was declared brought dead, officials said.

District Health Officer Rajesh Suragihalli told *TNIE* that Dr Jayaprakash died due to cardiac arrest and it had nothing to do with the vaccine. "The central ministry has clearly stated that the doctor had died because of cardiac arrest and is not related to the vaccine," he said.

Meanwhile, 55 per cent of the targeted beneficiaries took the vaccine in the state on Wednesday, though some districts like Chitradurga, Dharwad and Koppal continued to show only about 28 per cent people coming forward to take the jab. P3

Week before release, Sasikala hospitalised

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

INCARCERATED in a disproportionate assets case, V K Sasikala, a close associate of former Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalitha, was admitted to Bowring Hospital on Wednesday afternoon after she developed fever and lung infection, sources privy to the information told *TNIE*.

"Sasikala had fever, chest congestion and dry cough for more than a week. The prison doctors suspected lung infection and advised that she should be admitted to a hospital. She was taken to Bowring Hospital with police escort in the afternoon. She was admitted in the casualty section of the government hospital in Shivajinagar and underwent some tests, including for Covid-19," the sources said. She is being treated for SARI.

"Sasikala's Rapid Antigen Test and RT-PCR test for Covid are negative," said Dean and Director of Bowring Hospital, Dr Manoj Kumar. The hospital had earlier stated she was "stable with supportive measures, antibiotics and oxygen. On her arrival at the hospital, her oxygen saturation was 79 per cent". P7

Apex court rejects pleas against Aadhaar verdict

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed by 4:1 petitions seeking review of its verdict upholding the validity of the Aadhaar law.

"In our opinion, no case for review of judgment and order dated 26.09.2018 is made out," a five-judge Bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar said. "We hasten to add that change in the law or subsequent decision/judgment of a coordinate or larger Bench by itself cannot be regarded as a ground for review," the court noted.

However, Justice D Y Chandrachud allowed the petitions. He cited the fact that another Constitution bench, while hearing a case relating to the validity of Finance Act, 2017 (Rojer Mathew v South Indian Bank Ltd), had held that the Aadhaar judgment did not correctly lay down the law regarding what constitutes a 'Money Bill' under Article 110 of the Constitution.

"If these review petitions are to be dismissed and the larger bench reference in Rojer Mathew case were to disagree with the analysis of the majority opinion in Aadhaar judgment, it would have serious consequences .... As such, the present batch of review petitions should be kept pending until the larger bench decides the questions," he held.

AZIM PREMJI GETS RELIEF FROM HC

The Karnataka High Court has upheld the order of the Special Court for Economic Offences, which dismissed two separate private complaints against former Wipro CMD Azim Premji and his wife by an NGO, India Awake For Transparency. The HC has set aside the orders passed by the 58th Additional City Civil and Sessions Court, which had restored the plaints before the Special Court | P5

IPL AUCTION: IN AND OUT

It is that time of the year when IPL franchises release players ahead of auction for the next season. As many as 57 players were not retained

AUSSIES FEEL THE HEAT

Day after suffering defeat to India, some of Australian cricketers were let go. Among those who are back in the auction pool include Steve Smith (RR), Glenn Maxwell (KXIP), Aaron Finch (RCB), Alex Carey (DC), Billy Stanlake (SRH), Nathan Coulter Nile, James Pattinson (MI) and Chris Green (KKR)

CSK RETAIN RAINA

The three-time champs are looking to rebuild released Kedar Jadhav, Piyush Chawla and Murali Vijay among others. However, CSK have decided to keep Suresh Raina, Dwayne Bravo and Imran Tahir for one more season

SAMSON IS NEW RR CAPTAIN

With Rajasthan releasing Smith back into the auction pool, Sanju Samson has been named their new captain. He is the first player from Kerala to captain an IPL side